

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1461, FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 2005

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee may meet next week to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 1461, the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2005. The bill was introduced on April 5 and referred to the Committee on Financial Services which ordered the bill reported out by a vote of 65-5 on May 25 and filed in the House on July 14.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in room H-312 of the Capitol by noon on Tuesday, October 25, 2005. Members should draft their amendments to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on Financial Services on July 14. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format. Members are advised to check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman: the bill which you just indicated would be on the floor next week and you asked for amendments to be filed in a timely fashion is a very important bill. It came out, as you pointed out, with overwhelming bipartisan support. I think you said 65-7. Since that time, it is my understanding that there has been some change in the bill. In particular, I refer to the provision which deals with the ability of those who may receive dollars under the provisions of the bill for the purposes of constructing affordable housing, that if they receive Federal funds that they will be unable to thereafter participate in encouraging voter registration drives or getting more people on the rolls to vote. That is something that I think the whole House ought to address.

I believe the ranking member is going to ask that that be struck from the bill so that there not be a preclusion on voter registration drives or participation. The Catholic Conference is very concerned about that. I would presume a number of faith-based organizations are very concerned about that provision. I may have a discussion briefly with the acting majority leader on that issue as well.

But can the gentleman tell me whether or not he believes the Rules

Committee will allow the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) to offer an amendment which would put the bill back in the position which 65 people in the committee supported at the time it was reported out.

I thank my colleague for yielding and would ask him if he can give us some thought on that issue, which we feel very strongly about, and hope that that amendment can be protected and made in order by the committee and that we will have a full and fair debate on the floor of the House with reference to that amendment.

Mr. SESSIONS. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman not only asking these questions but bringing up and talking about some important issues.

First of all, I would be the first one to admit that we have for the last few weeks been dealing with issues related to Katrina and other important matters as it relates to housing.

To answer the gentleman most directly, I must say that the instructions that I have given are that we are going back to the bill of July 14. There have been no changes made at this time to that. That will be the text that will be considered by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee, as we deliberate, we take into consideration amendments of how people would wish for the bill to be changed, new thoughts and ideas; and that will be just as current as the filing date that we have set. So it is my hope that you would have the opportunity to work with Members of your party, and that this announcement would be available for Members of my party to say that we are open to any amendment, any thought process that people would like to come to the Rules Committee.

It is not unusual for us to hold hearings and take testimony that may take hours and hours and we hear from people. That thought process will be considered next week. The chairman of the Rules Committee, the gentleman from California, has instructed me to advise Members that we will be ready to do business next week and be open to the amendment process as Members choose.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information. There has been some suggestion, I understand, however, that although the bill may be in the same shape now, that there is a manager's amendment proposed and that the vote on the manager's amendment, which we presume, we have not seen it, would cover a multitude of subjects that are in the bill; that the vote on the issue that I have raised could be made on that manager's amendment. Therefore, you would have to vote against the manager's amendment if it changes the provision to which I referred.

I would hope, and this is not a question, just an expression, that the majority would make in order an amendment so that we could have a debate on that issue if in fact the manager's

amendment does what we are concerned about and some people are proposing undermining the ability of some groups, faith-based groups. That is why the Catholic Conference is so concerned about it, faith-based groups or other groups who would build affordable housing, get money under the bill and then be precluded from participating in any efforts, not partisan efforts but nonpartisan efforts to get people on the rolls.

I would just urge the gentleman, who is a distinguished member of the Rules Committee, to consider, very hopefully, favorably the request of Ranking Member FRANK to have made in order an amendment to deal with that subject. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SESSIONS. I would say to the gentleman, reclaiming my time, that the Rules Committee has been visited by the gentleman from Massachusetts. He is no stranger to the Rules Committee. You also in your leadership capacities and otherwise as a Member of Congress representing your constituents from Maryland have been very vigorous in your support of the things which you believe, the ideas which you choose to press to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee is very open, and our esteemed chairman will make available that time.

We do not know the content of that manager's amendment that you are talking about at this time. We once again encourage all Members, including the process that will be followed for the manager's amendment, to be filed on that date, October 25.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the distinguished acting majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding and would say that we intend to convene the House next Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members' offices by the end of the week. Any vote called on these measures on Tuesday will be rolled until 6:30 p.m.

For Wednesday and the balance of the week, the House will consider additional legislation under suspension of the rules, as well as several measures under a rule. One will be the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2005 that has just been discussed; two, the Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2005. The third bill that we would expect to see under a rule would be House Joint Resolution 65, which would be a resolution necessary under the Defense Base Closure Commission for the House to